

International Business and Economic Review | ISSN:1647-1989 | e-ISSN 2183-3265
<http://www.cigest.ensinus.pt/index.php/pt/iber/presentation>

EVENTS ROLE IN MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

O PAPEL DOS EVENTOS NA GESTÃO DO MARKETING E DA COMUNICAÇÃO

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyse the importance of the event as an integrated tool in communication and marketing. The literature review stresses the importance of business management as a way to guide a company in order to produce and which has the support of the Marketing to perform the management of the product / service as well as to help communicate. Under the various communication tools the researchers highlight the events as a way to divulge the companies and the brands to their different stakeholders.

KEY-WORDS: Management, Marketing, Communication, Events.

RESUMO

Este artigo tem como objectivo analisar a importância do evento como ferramenta integrada na comunicação e no marketing. A revisão de literatura aponta para a importância da gestão empresarial como forma de orientar uma empresa com o objectivo de produzir e que conta com o apoio do Marketing para realizar a gestão do produto /serviço bem como para ajudar a comunicar. No âmbito das diversas ferramentas da comunicação salientamos os eventos como forma de aproximar as empresas e as marcas dos seus diferentes públicos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Gestão, Marketing, Comunicação, Eventos.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays each organization work to do a better management of their resources in order to achieve their goals and one of the most important parts is the implementation of an effective marketing and communication plan. At present, companies need to appeal to a larger number of components in communication, besides advertising and public relations, to achieve success. In addition, communication areas, previously secondary, are gaining their own space due to their unique features and the evidence performance.

This research work has the main goal to show that integrated communication should encompass other communication techniques which have been highlighted in the marketing plan, not only as alternatives but as essential, to achieve the strategic objectives of the organizations.

This research work begins by noting the strategic importance of the event organization sector, consisting mainly of SMEs, followed by a literature review related to the areas of management, marketing and events.

We propose a new approach and present in our research work the results of a study that leverage events to a main communication tool. In the study a questionnaire was administered to a group of marketing and communication experts in the field of events organization which claim this area has been leverage as it has been recording economic and strategic importance within the integrated communication.

2. IMPORTANCE OF EVENT'S SECTOR IN PORTUGAL

Portugal is a small country but it has been a privileged local to organize national and international events, in part due to our good weather conditions, sunny and warm days, most part of the year and in other hand the famous Portuguese hospitality.

The Portuguese event's enterprises operate in corporate events, in tourism activities, in sporting events and in entertainment and music festivals. This country is famous for organizing international and national events like Rock in Rio and other Music festivals, football championships and other sports like the international golf tournament "Portugal Masters" from "European Tour", and all the corporate events like conferences and seminars.

The event's sector in Portugal has been growing in the last decades in the number of business and in the number of investment, but it has not been studied.

2.1. CHARACTERIZATION OF SECTOR: EVENTS ENTERPRISES IN PORTUGAL ARE SME'S

According to European Commission, “some SME sectors has posted relative strong positive growth from 2008 to 2013 with “business services”, “retail and wholesale trade” and “other sectors” (which include all other non-financial business sectors) posting positive value added growth”². In this report, Business services sector includes activities like information and communication.

The few statistics studies available shows that most of the companies that are organizing events for other organizations are Small and Medium Enterprises³, where is possible to see that events business are listed in the list of small enterprises.

Once there aren't national figures about this issue, we use the European trends. The European Commission study the economic importance of SME's and the studies available indicates that there are 3,433,896 SME's in the Market services⁴ (where are included the Event's suppliers) and only 5,049 large enterprises in the same category, these indicative values show that most companies in the sector of event organization are also SME 's.

The SME'S are studied by European commission because when analyzed as a group the small enterprises are important for the economy and for the number of people employed.

3. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MARKETING AND MANAGEMENT

Enterprise management assume an important role in the control of the economic feasibility of companies and in assuring the correct supervise of all the organizations areas including marketing and communication among others.

Management is defined as a complex activity, involving the combination and coordination of human, physical and financial resources, in order to produce goods or services that are both popular and that may be offered at a price that can be paid, while making a work environment acceptable for all involved (Drucker, 1994).

Others refer to management as the process of planning, organizing, leading and controlling the work of members of the organizations and the use of all organizational resources to achieve the established enterprises goals (Koontz & Weihrich, 1998, p.4).

² European Commission - Annual Report on European SMEs 2013/2014 – A Partial and Fragile Recovery.

³ Sabi Database.

⁴ European Commission - Annual Report on European SMEs 2012/2013.

Additionally, there are three important and different management responsibilities in an organization: 1) work for the mission of the institution; 2) make productive work; 3) managing social impacts and social responsibility. One of the factors considered by Drucker that affect significantly company's management is marketing, among others (Drucker, 1977).

Nowadays, enterprise management strategy are changing very fast because of the utilization of the information and communication technologies and, simultaneously, marketing and communication activities permit divulge products and services with a dynamic never previously achieved.

Other researchers propose a practical model for change management, based on a collation of best practices from several organisations. The model focuses on five key success factors thought to be the drivers for successful change: commitment, social and cultural issues, communication tools and methodology and interactions (Clarke & Garside, 1997). The literature review in management area points out the importance of marketing and communication activities in achieving organizational goals.

4. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION EVOLUTION

Marketing concept has changed since the first definition. At the end of 1940s, production efficiencies were regarded as essential for achieving and maintaining successful and prosperous business operations in the marketplace. In the 1950s, marketing scholars began to argue that corporations should pay more attention to customers' needs and wants (Svensson, 2005). Following this thought it is possible to elaborate three principal phases in the marketing evolution (Table 1).

Table 1 – Marketing evolution adapted from Ramalhoto.

Phase	Designation	Characteristics	Authors
1	Analyze the consumer Focus on the customer, that is, on the individual making decisions.	Consumer - purchase	Drucker, 1958
2	Consumer satisfaction is the most important	Exchange - customer satisfaction	Levitt, 1960
3	Activity and set of processes for creating, communicating and market value offerings to	Business - processes - customers	AMA 2013

	consumers		
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Source: Ramalhoto, 2013.

According to Drucker (1958:252-253), "Marketing is also the most effective engine of economic development, particularly in its ability rapidly to develop entrepreneurs and managers. And is a contribution to what is the greatest need of an "undeveloped" country: a systematic discipline in a vital area of economic activity. It's a discipline based on global and theoretical concepts and which can, therefore, be both taught and learned. Marketing, as we have come to understand it, has its focus on the customer. Is the process through which economy is integrated into society to serve human needs".

AMA⁵ Marketing definition leads to the importance of quality management processes in order to support integrated communications in organizations (Gronstedt, 1996).

Recently, American Marketing Association has approved the following Marketing definition:

"Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large (Approved July 2013).

The evolution of society and the consequents changes in economics, business and management caused changes in marketing and how to implement their communication techniques. In this scenario, it is important to understand marketing communication globally.

4.1. MARKETING COMMUNICATION CONCEPT

The researchers have been studying the integrated marketing communications (IMC) field, but they didn't reach a consensus. Some researchers consider the integrated marketing communications a global concept that includes: public relations, advertising, direct marketing, promotion and other disciplines coordinated through a single planning system (Foster 1990). In the 1990's, the number of companies that have adopted a multidisciplinary approach to corporate communications planning increased. In fact, the link between public relations and corporate advertising was consolidated. Take, for example, a company that wants to stand out as a leader in innovation can work to achieve this goal through corporate advertising or working the public relations: placing its experts speaking to the press on the latest developments in the industry, and if it developed a new employee incentive program to encourage innovation, the effect could be multiplied. The press coverage that resulted would extend the advertising schedule, and add third-party endorsement along with added credibility.

⁵ AMA - American Marketing Association.

In an early stage, IMC was associated to consistency among marketing mix elements, positive synergies among elements of marketing mix, various multimedia methods of customer contact, corporate and product line strategy, and the reengineering and realignment of firms (Lehmann, 1994).

Stewart, (1996) refer that the availability of many new options for communication and promotion has not only created a need for better understanding of how and when these tools may be effective, it has also created a need to better coordinate their use to assure consistent, effective, and efficient outcomes. At the same time, the fragmentation of markets has made use of more traditional forms of mass advertising less efficient and effective for reaching the consumers of many products and services. Different communication and promotion tools reach different segments of consumers and must be coordinated to assure optimal market coverage. IMC has emerged as a potential solution to these needs for coordinating multiple forms of communication.

Some of the researchers' points out that integrated communications includes advertising, direct response, sales promotion and public relations. This mix becomes insufficient for the current and complex marketing management.

In their research about marketing and communication, Duncan & Moriarty (1998), include events in IMC along with personal sales, advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing, public relations, and packaging.

For several years took place an accentuated discussion about integrated marketing communications (Schultz, & Kitchen, 1997; Schultz, 1992; Pickton, & Broderick, 2001; Belch, & Belch, 2003; Shimp, T., & Terence. Shimp. (2000). The breadth and depth of academic research in the field of integrated marketing communications (IMC) has come a long way since its initial conceptualization as a formal field of study in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

According to Eagle & Kitchen (2000) the definition of IMC by the American Association of Advertising Agencies was used as a foundation for the empirical analysis. This IMC definition is the following: "a concept of marketing communications planning that recognizes the added value of a comprehensive plan, that evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of communications disciplines, e.g. general advertising, direct response, sales promotion and public relations - and combines these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency and maximum communication impact".

Some years later, Kliatchko (2008) note that the largest number of academic researches and articles published since 2000 still deal with the definition, theoretical foundations, status and scope of the IMC concept (Cornelissen & Lock 2000; Schultz & Kitchen 2000b; Cornelissen 2001; Duncan & Mulhern 2004; Gould 2004; Han et al.. 2004; Jones et al.. 2004; Swain 2004;

Kitchen 2005; Kitchen & Li 2005; Kliatchko 2005; Madhavaram et al.. 2005; McGrath 2005a, 2005b; Reid et al.. 2005).

Kliatchko (2008) also refer the relation between IMC and Public relations and how IMC and PR may be integrated in actual practice. However, there are certain disagreements on the issue, coming mainly from the public relations sector (Miller & Rose 1994; Moriarty 1994; Kitchen & Moss 1995; Gronstedt 1996; Grunig & Grunig 1998; Wightman 1999). Leading the critics from the public relations camp opposing IMC are Grunig and Grunig (1998), who claim that most IMC adherents view public relations with a biased and narrow perspective (i.e. as merely a technical support instead of a management function).

The IMC literature review shows that most of the areas of research initiated in the 1990s have continued to be of interest to scholars over the last few years. Three topics, however, were identified as having been of special interest to scholars since 2000. These topics include: (1) IMC and internal marketing issues and corporate communications; (2) IMC and branding, brand equity, identity and outcomes; (3) IMC and media planning, media measurement, and integration/synergy of multiple media. While studies in these areas may have been initiated even in the past decade, few journal articles have given them substantial emphasis in comparison to those published since 2000 (Kliatchko, 2008).

Since the first IMC studies, it is clear the existence of the concept of marketing communications planning that recognizes the value in a program that integrates a variety of strategic disciplines, e.g., general advertising, direct response, sales promotion and public relations – and consistency, and maximum communication impact as stated by Reitman (1994).

At present marketing is used in many different areas of business and public sphere. Because of the diversity of such areas, authors dealing with such issues feel that a different marketing concept should be found for each of them (Lopes & Varela, 2014).

Currently marketing strategies include more than the techniques mentioned, all possible ways to communicate via web 2.0. The internet made possible communication between a company and its public faster and in a more economical way. Communication is one of the most important aspects of a company and is considered one of the most important resources to business management (Lopes, Varela, Carrillo Durán, Rosario, 2012). Furthermore, the research of Lopes & Rosario (2013) shows that younger surfing the internet, but dedicate most time to social networks.

The rising use of the Internet as efficient and profitable communication tool helps companies to reduce costs in advertising. Among all the tools which digital marketing offers, social networks are being increasingly used. Sites like Facebook, MySpace, Twitter or Google+ are very popular among young people (Bodnárová, B., Hudacková, V., Varela, M., 2012). Consequently, it is clear to indicate a trend towards the use of web 2.0 and social networking marketing strategy.

After the literature review is possible to state that integrated marketing communications includes a variety of strategic disciplines, but few researchers study the link to corporate events. Events field has more been studied in the last years but in specific categories. In this research study we will analysed the literature review and present the results of an empirical work.

5 – CORPORATE EVENTS | EVENT MARKETING

Nowadays, events organized by companies or brands are considered an important part of marketing and communication plan. Some years ago, advertising and public relations were considered the best way to divulge corporate information. In the last years the Portuguese marketing and communication practitioners understood that an event was one unique opportunity to emotional involvement with the brand or company and at the same time communicating the corporate messages to target audience, although organizing events are not an easy or economic task.

The researchers that have been working in events field point out the following definition:

Table 2 – Events Definition

Authors	Event's Definition
Kotler (2002)	Occurrences designed to communicate particular messages to target audiences.
Wood & Masterman (2008)	Any event that: Helps market a product/service, idea, place or person; Communicates with a target audience; that has the potential to communicate.
Drengner et al. (2008)	Event marketing: Is understood as a communication tool whose purpose is to disseminate a company's marketing messages by involving target groups in experiential activities.

Source: Author's elaboration.

5.1. TYPE OF EVENTS

The events can be named according to the objectives, the target and duration. Events are organized by the companies or by communication agency and are focused on different "event objects," such as brands, product lines, or the company itself.

Table 3 – Marketing Events. According to Wood & Masterman (2008).

Marketing Events	
1	Product Launches
2	Product Sampling
3	Open Days
4	Publicity events
5	Incentive /Rewards events
6	Road shows
7	Conferences
8	Press conference
9	Exhibitions
10	Competitions /contests
11	Corporate / Entertainment
12	Charity fundraisers
13	Trade shows
14	Product visitor attractions

Source: Adapted from Wood & Masterman (2008).

In this research work is consider important to list the events, but the study of each type of them and analyze each target should be done in another separate research.

5.2. THE IMPORTANT FEATURES OF THE EVENT

As every experience has to be extraordinary to have an effect, the event must strive to create a 'flow state experience' for the majority attending. This may involve surprise, novelty or challenge. According to Wood & Masterman (2008) and analyzing their previous research (Wood & Masterman, 2007) into successful marketing events, identifies seven event attributes -

the 7 'I's: Involvement, Interaction, Immersion, Intensity, Individuality, Innovation and Integrity. These characteristics increase the event experience and are defined in Table 4.

Table 4 – Seven event attributes from Wood & Masterman (2008).

The 7 'I's which enhance the event experience:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Involvement – an emotional involvement with the brand, the event, the experience
<input type="checkbox"/>	Interaction – with brand ambassadors, with other attendees, with exhibits, with the brand
<input type="checkbox"/>	Immersion – of all senses, isolated from other messages
<input type="checkbox"/>	Intensity – memorable, high impact
<input type="checkbox"/>	Individuality – unique, one-to-one opportunities, customization. Each experience is different
<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovation – creative in content, location, timing, audience etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Integrity – seen as genuine and authentic and providing real benefits and value to the consumer.

Source: Adapted from Wood & Masterman (2008).

The literature review shows that researchers study the event's field from different perspectives as presented in table 5.

Table 5 – Events Research.

Author's	Research
1- Gwinner & Eaton (1999)	1 - Building brand image through event sponsorship. The event image is transferred to the brand.
2- Chalip & Green (2001)	2 – Image of the host place from the event is affected in a positive way.
3- Dwyer et al. (2000)	3 – Events tangible impacts: Media, Fiscal, Economics impacts. Intangible impacts: social and economic impacts.
4- Abbot & Geddie (2000)	4 – The importance of crowd management plan in the event in order to reduce crowd control.
5 – Close et al. (2006)	5 – Event marketing turns possible consumer engagement.
6- Wohlfeil & Whelan (2006)	6 - Consumer motivations to participate in Brands Event Marketing related with consumer relation with the brand and with the type of the event.
7- Martensen et al. (2007)	7 - Effectiveness of Event Marketing and how influences the perception of a brand in the minds of the customers: the case of a sporting event.
8- Parent & Séguin (2008)	8 – Brand Creation for International Large-Scale Sporting Events.
9- Wood & Masterman (2008)	9 – Measuring consumer response to the event.

Source: Author's elaboration.

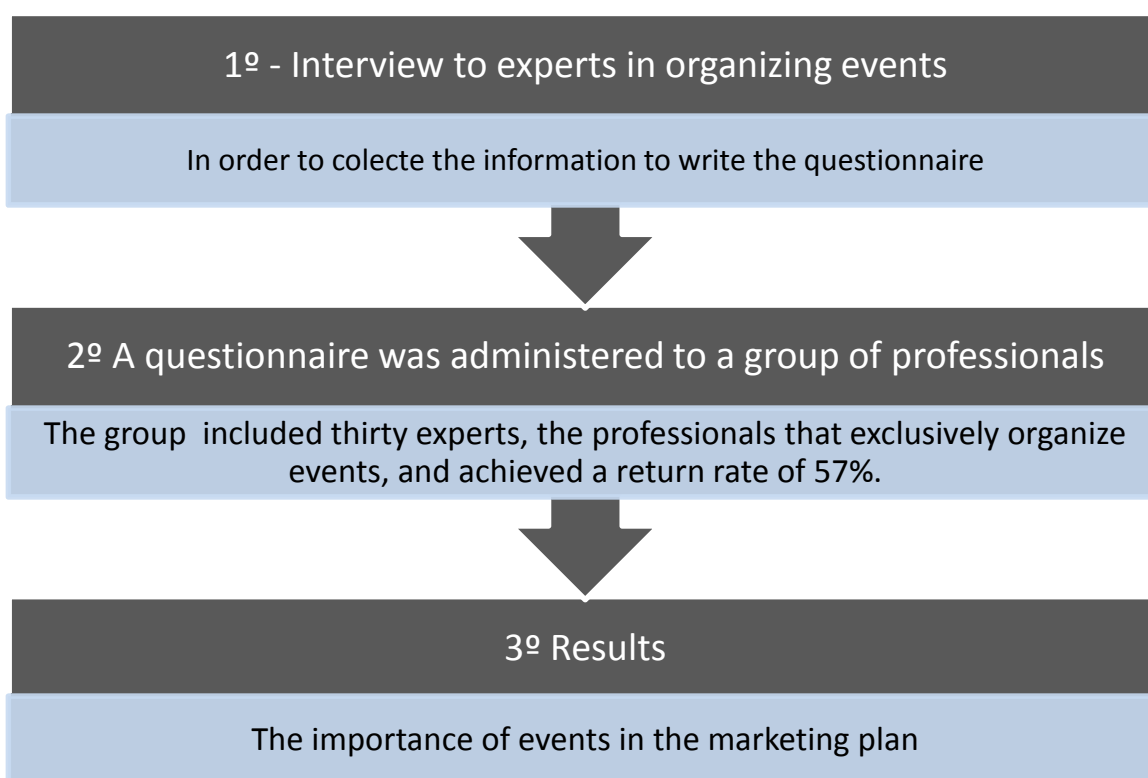
Additionally, Varela, Lopes and Ramalhoto (2014) refer that in corporate communication events are important in building brand identity, and they point out that the event venue is critical to the success of the event. In the same study is proved that the venue should identify themselves with the target audience of the event, and with the brand values from the product or company that is being divulged.

In the present research, will be asked through a questionnaire, the opinion of practitioners, who organize corporate events, how they understand the importance of events.

6. METODOLOGY

In order to understand what practitioners who organize corporate events think about the importance and integration of event in Communication and Marketing plan, we managed the empirical work by three phases.

Table 6 - Research design



Source: Author's elaboration.

This research occurred during the years of 2011 and 2012, period in which was analyzed the literature review, the specialized and professional publications, elaborate and applied the interviews and questionnaire to a group of experts in the field.

In order to collect the information to write the questionnaire were interviewed two practitioners who organize events along to the research done in specialized and professional publications. The analyze of the information of these open interview turn possible to elaborate a questionnaire that was distributed to a group of experts in organizing events, which had a return rate of 57%.

6.1. RESULTS FROM EMPIRICAL WORK

In the first phase of research, two practitioners in events field were interviewed, with the primary objective of gather the important information from the primary sources about the importance of corporate events in the communication and marketing plan. The information assembled was vital to create the questionnaire.

From this interview it is possible to emphasize that for the events practitioners is important to choose the certain venue for the type of event that will be happen according to the marketing plans objectives.

In the second phase of this study, the questionnaire was applied to a group of thirty practitioners that are experts in organizing events. This group was constituted with experts who showed interest in participating in this study when contacted first by phone.

From the thirty experts, working in corporate and in communication agencies, was registered a 57% return rate.

This research shows that events are important in communication and marketing corporate because (Table 7):

Table 7 – Research results.

Results	Agree	Totally Agree	Indifferent	Not Agree
The importance of the event in the global communication strategy.	-	86%	11%	-
The importance of the event in building the brand identity.	38%	55%	11%	
The importance of the event as a communication tool	43%	57%	-	-
The event as a tool of content communication differentiator.	-	86%	-	-
Events as brand communication facilitators.	-	72%	7%	
The event as a tool of content communication differentiator.	20%	43%	-	-
The event is an additional tool to brand communication strategy.	7%	86%	7%	-
The event as a primary tool of building the brand concept.	51%	-	35%	14%
The event is a differentiating tool for communicate brand values and attributes.	58%	42%		

Source: Author's elaboration.

Additionally, the events experts referred that 70% of the events organized by them were integrated in communication plans and 30% were events out of the corporate communication plan.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The experts of the field indicated that there is awareness of the importance of corporate events as a communication tool.

Although there are not exact statistics about the results of the events, communication and marketing professionals know that the results from events as a tool are always positive. That's why 97% of the experts totally agree in declaring that corporate events are very important in the global communication strategy.

In this group of practitioners, 86% also agree that, the event is a very good tool in building and maintaining the company relationship with the different kind of public, because an event is an unique opportunity to put together in one place the publics of a company and permit to happen a magic moment in which people meet and engagement with the company or with the brand take place.

The experts declared that 70% of the events organized by them were integrated in communication plans and 30% were events out of the corporate communication plan.

With all of these positive answerers, it's clear that if events are an important communication tool in the marketing and communication plan which can leverage the economic results of a company, the budget dedicated to this communication tool turns out to have return in corporate management.

This study has some limitations due to the lack of quantitative and qualitative studies. On the other hand, professionals experience difficulties in conducting studies like this because of the total commitment to their work. The sample size, which is appropriate for a preliminary study, does not generalize the findings to the entire industry.

It is important to allow the extension of the sample and the scope of this study, to strengthen the aforementioned concepts.

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